

The Key Work of School Boards

Every high-achieving school board is focused on functioning in ways that improve student achievement. Research shows that the more effective the board, the better a school district's students perform. In every decision and every action, the school board governance role centers on improving student learning outcomes.

The Key Work of School Boards is a data-driven framework that aims to help boards achieve excellence in school governance through a roadmap designed to assist and support their work. It is backed by research that identifies the characteristics of effective boards that can lead to improvement and sustainable change in school districts.

Newly revised in 2015, NSBA's Key Work of School Boards framework identifies the core skills that effective boards need to ensure that all students achieve at high levels through excellence in governance. Within the Key Work framework, five Key Work action areas are examined in detail:



Vision

Effective school boards establish a clear vision with high expectations for quality teaching and learning that supports strong student outcomes. They establish clear and specific goals to move districts forward.

Accountability

High academic standards, transparency, and accountability undergird a world-class education. True accountability depends on open decision making, community engagement and support, and receptivity to new ideas and constructive criticism.

Policy

Policy is how a board sustainably exercises power to serve students. Through policy, school boards establish a set of cohesive guidelines able to transform vision into reality.

Community Leadership

Through public advocacy and community engagement, school boards share their concerns and actions with the public. Community leadership that builds public support is vital to implement the board's vision.

Board/Superintendent Relationships

Both the school board and the superintendent have essential leadership roles that are interconnected but different. Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each in their respective roles with strong collaboration and mutual trust.